

Community Engagement Committee

Skagit Watershed Council Sept 27th, 2022, 9:30 am – 11:30 am

Draft Minutes

Present at meeting:

From Pacific Mammal Research (PacMam): Cindy Elliser

From Skagit Conservation District (SCD): Cindy Pierce

From Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group (SFEg): Kenzie Kesling + Kaitlyn Mruk + Lucy Degrace

From (Skagit Land Trust (STL): Gabby Jacunski + Stacy Dahl

From Skagit Watershed Council (SWC), also reporting for Skagit Conservation Education Alliance (SCEA) and the Skagit River Salmon Festival (SRSF): Holli Watne

From Swinomish Indian Tribal Community (SITC): Melissa Ciesielski

(Underlined means decision point; ***Bold** mean action item)

1. We approved the August 2022 notes

2. Roundtable of updates

- a.** PacMam is a research and education nonprofit based out of Anacortes. Their main focus is on photo ID of whales and linking ecology and behavior of harbor porpoises. Cindy teaches at Skagit Valley College and gives lots of presentations from Pre-K to retirement communities. She has lots of artifacts including whale bones for students to explore. PacMam offers half- and full-day field trips to their research lab. Cindy has done STEM workshops for teachers and specifically come to this meeting to offer help with our discussion on doing a teacher training.

b. SCD

- i.** Cindy will be at Ovnelle's Farm for this weekend's Festival of Family Farms. She is currently getting Stream Team set up for the season.
- ii.** Taylor is working with the Children of the Valley – meeting monthly, putting together an April Earth Day Event from 2-6pm. CEC members will be invited to participate. More info at a later meeting.

c. SCEA

- i. Will be at Taylor Shellfish Farm for this weekend's Festival of Family Farms
- ii. Will be hosting a [Watershed Art and Discovery Day](#) at Padilla Bay on October 22nd.

Volunteers are needed. SWC and SLT will be hosting an art activity. There is still room for another group to offer an art project.
- iii. Working with Mount Vernon Library to provide backpacks full of educational activities and supplies that anyone could check out. They hope to have these backpacks available sometime next year.

d. SFEG

- i. New interns! Kenzie will be working in education. She is a recent WWU grad who studies Anthropology and Spanish. Kaitlyn is still a WWU student will be helping part-time. Victoria is another intern.
- ii. School programs starting next week. They are preparing to have 12 Salmon-in-the-classroom tanks, including one at the Children's Museum. Tanks will be set up in January.
- iii. [Planting events](#) in October. More this spring.
- iv. Three [Salmon Sightings](#) events are planned for this fall/winter. Volunteers will count spawning salmon and teach visitors about what's happening.

e. SITC has no updates at this time

f. STL

- i. Gabby will be doing stewardship and mostly community engagement. She has an Environmental Science degree from the University of Connecticut. This is her second AmeriCorps internship after doing stewardship in Florida.
- ii. Lots of [upcoming events](#), including fundraisers and work parties. They are always looking for more volunteers.

g. SRSF hosted a booth at the Mount Vernon Farmer's Market (MVFM) on Sept 10th. With help from Holli, Kenzie, and Kaitlyn, they got hundreds of folks to answer salmon trivia for free swag.

h. SWC

i. The Skagit Salmon Science Series is still going on at each of their quarterly meetings.

Videos of presentations and supporting documents are being posted at

<https://www.skagitwatershed.org/resources/skagit-watershed-workshops/>

ii. Holli has gotten responses from a handful of teachers wanting to set up Drain Rangers and/or STEAM Luminary Arts programs.

iii. Holli has applied for a grant from the Rose Community Foundation to support SWC's community engagement programs.

iv. Illuminight is being planned for Friday, January 27th, 2023. CEC organizations are invited to participate by either hosting a window display in downtown Mount Vernon (to go up early January), hosting a conversation booth at the event, or just joining the procession.

3. STEAM Train discussion

a. Holli is drafting a free website where we can share links to various resources for K-12 teachers and everybody else in the Skagit Watershed: <https://sites.google.com/view/skagit-resource-guide/home>

i. A lot of work needs to be done on this page before it is shareable. Gabby, Stacy, and Cindy E have agreed to help populate it.

ii. The page is currently visible as a draft. Holli tried to find the page through a google search that she was not signed into and could not find the page. She tried again while logged into her Google account (through which she has viewed the page many times) and the page still didn't show up in the first few pages of the search. Does this mean that the audience will never find it without a direct link? It may not be easy to find in a search unless someone pays for the page to have a proper domain name.

iii. *We will discuss this page further next month

- b.** Holli is interested in doing a teacher workshop for STEM clockwork hours. Her current plan is to focus on stormwater education. She has included \$ for developing this training as part of the Rose Foundation grant that she submitted earlier this month. She will not find out if she will be awarded anything until late November.
- i.** Cindy P. and Jason O. from Skagit County have expressed interest in aiding in this training with their experience in teaching on this subject. If Holli gets the grant, it could pay these folks for their time.
 - ii.** The only other person who expressed interest in doing a teacher training was Melissa. She could do a training on indigenous education. Holli said she would love to learn more about this.
 - iii.** Cindy pointed out that the time to submit an application to be able to offer STEM clock hours for any given school year is July-August. She says the process is really easy, but it takes a lot of time to get approval. Anyone one wanting to do a teacher training this school year who does not already have permission to offer STEM clock hours this year will need to have their training sponsored by an organization that is pre-approved.
 - iv.** Before we can offer STEM clock hours, a committee needs to approve our workshop/training plan.
 - v.** Something needs to be offered for teachers to take home. This can be a resource list, worksheets for students, Power Points, curriculum, etc.
 - vi.** Cindy E says she's gotten good feedback from past teachers after her trainings and she's happy to help anyone who's putting together their first teacher training.
 - vii.** Stacy said that Pacific Education Institute has offered to host SLT in offering teacher trainings for STEM clock hours. PEI is offering a teach the teacher training next month and Holli will check it out.

- viii. The timing on when to host a teacher training has been difficult. Cindy E says she's had moderate success doing virtual training around 5:30pm.
4. Last month, Hannah Liss from Puget Sound Partnership (PSP) sent us a Recorded presentation that was requested at a previous meeting. The group discussed this presentation. Here are some questions that came up:
- a. What does PSP think we should be communicating in our school programs? For example, what, if any, items on your action agenda are applicable to youth?
 - b. Are there any surprising new research findings that we should know about? Anything research that an elementary student could connect to?
 - c. How would you describe your boots-on-the-ground work to an someone in elementary school?
5. We discussed if we want to continue doing hybrid meetings. So far there has been very little in-person participation in-person at Padilla Bay and it required a lot more work to set up. We have decided to try to do one more hybrid meeting this year, at the SWC office. Holli checked with the office manager and she said the November meeting will work best.

Upcoming meetings:

October 25th – Online one

November 29th – at the SWC office (or online)

No December meeting.